श्री दिग्विजय सिंह : बाकी राज्यों को क्यों छोड़ रहे हैं ? यह तो रीजनल इंबेलेंस **(व्यवधान)**

श्री सुशील कुमार संभाजीराव शिन्दे : हिमाचल प्रदेश का मैं विशेष रूप से इसलिए कह रहा हूं क्योंकि हमारे कई साथ गर्मी से बचने के लिए ठंडा होने के लिए हिमाचल प्रदेश में जाते हैं। इसलिए मैं यह कहता हूं कि उन लोगों को अपने क्षेत्र के लोगों से कंटेक्ट करने की सुविधा वहां से मिल सके **(व्यवधान)** ठीक है, मेरे पास तो 14 राज्य हैं लेकिन मैं विशेष रूप से हिमाचल प्रदेश के लिए पूछना चाहूंगा क्योंकि मंत्री जी खुद उस स्टेट से आते हैं, फिर भी इतना बड़ा बैक्लॉग वहां है। इसलिए मैं इतना ही कहूंगा कि महाराष्ट्र में काफी खेती करने वाले जो लोग हैं हर देहात में टेलीफोन मांग रहे हैं। वहां अगर 20 हजार विलेजेज का बैक्लॉग है तो वहां क्या आप इस साल 10 हजार को टेलीफोन सुविधा दे देंगे और इसी प्रकार से 50 प्रतिशत काम हिमाचल प्रदेश में कर देंगे और बाकी 50 प्रतिशत काम अगले साल में कर देंगे तो इससे अगले दो साल में सारा काम कंपलीट हो सकेगा। मैं आपसे इतना स्पष्ट रूप से आश्वासन चाहता हूं।

श्री सुखराम : सभापति जी, मैं माननीय सदस्य का आभारी हूं जिन्होंने हिमाचल प्रदेश की ओर विशेष ध्यान दिलाने की कोशिश की है। मैं माननीय सदन से एक बात का निवेदन करना चाहूंगा कि पिछले करीब तीन वर्षों से इस मंत्रालय को कोई बजटरी सपोर्ट नहीं मिली है। जो हमारा रेवेन्यू है, वह अभी जो इन्फास्ट्रक्चर है उसमें हम जनरेट करते हैं। उस रेवेन्यू से एक्सपेंशन भी कर रहे हैं, मेन्टिनेंस भी कर रहे हैं और गांवों में एक टेलीफोन के पीछे हमें एक लाख बीस हजार-पच्चीस हजार की सब्सिडी देनी पड़ती है। अब आप अंदाजा लगा लीजिए .. **(व्यवधान)** मेरी बात तो सुन लीजिए .. **(व्यवधान)**

श्री दिग्विजय सिंह : सुनते सुनते आधा घंटा हो गया। हम लोग मोटा-मोटी यह बात कहना चाहते हैं कि आपका नेशनल एवरेज 28 परसेंट है। दूसरी जगह डेवलपमेंट का काम तब तक नहीं होगा जब यह एवरेज पूरा न हो। इसका एश्योरेंस हमें दीजिए .. **(व्यवधान)** 28 परसेंट का जो एवरेज है यह तो कहिए कि 28 परसेंट का एवरेज जब पूरा होगा तभी दूसरी जगह लगेंगे। 12–13 परसेंट की नेशनल डिसपैरिटी है ... **(व्यवधान)**

श्री सुशील कुमार संभाजीराव शिन्दे : उत्तर प्रदेश के होकर हमारे ऊपर अन्याय मत कीजिए।

श्री मोहम्मद सलीम : दो मिनट की बात 20 मिनट में कहते हैं।

†[شری محمد سلیم : در ملت
ی. یا ۲۰ ملت میں کہتے ہیں۔ ع.]

MR. CHAIRMAN: Let the Minister answer.

श्री सुखराम : क्वेश्चन इनका है और इन्टरप्शन ये कर रहे हैं .. **(व्यवधान)**

मैंने आप से यह निवेदन किया कि धन के अभाव की वजह से जितनी आशा है सभी माननीय सदस्य को गांवों के बारे में वह हम पूरी नहीं कर सके। पर मैंने आपको इस बात का आश्वासन पहले भी दिया और अब भी आश्वासन देना चाहूंगा कि जिन स्टेटों में अभी बैक्लॉग है, पीछे हैं उनको प्राथमिकता दी जाएगी-महाराष्ट्र में भी। हिमाचल का आप ने, माननीय सदस्य ने अच्छा किया कि ध्यान दिला दिया। हिमाचल भी पीछे है कोई ऐसी बात नहीं है जो यहां माननीय सदस्य कहते हैं कि मेरी होम स्टेट है इस वास्ते मैंने हिमाचल को प्राथमिकता दी है। हिमाचल भी आपके साथ ही चल रहा है आप चिंता मत करिए।

Foreign assistance for lapping ONGC's well fire

*42. SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: †

SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM:

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Shri Krishna Kumar Birla.

(a) whether the special crisis management crack team of the ONGC has succeeded in capping the ONGC's well fire in Krishna Godavari basin in Andhra Pradesh;

(b) if not, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have asked for help from foreign countries for the same; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (CAPTAIN SATISH SHARMA): (a) Yes, Sir

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) ONGC sought help from professional fire fighters (from the USA). Initially the services of M|s. Neal Adams Fire Fighters Inc. Houston, USA were utilised and subsequently, M|s. Emergency Resources International Inc., Texas, USA assisted in the fire fighting.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: Sir, the Minister's reply is of some consolation. But it raises some basic questions. The fire in the ONGC well in the East Godavari District of Andhra Pradesh has been there since 8th January. High pressure pumps had to be brought from Shiv Sagar in Assam. These pumps were in addition to ten heavy duty water pumps which were kept ready and were used to extinguish the fire. I believe the pumps could splash on the flames 25,000 gallons of water per minute. Even then the fire could not be controlled for a long time and so foreign experts with additional equipments from the United States had to be called in. Fire in an oil-well is not an uncommon phenomenon. My first supplementary is, (a) What was the cause of this fire in the ONGC well? (b) Why did not the ONGC, which is a well-established public sector unit, keep in stock sophisticated equipments for such emergencies and why did it have to depend on foreign experts to come to its rescue? and (c) What was the total loss suffered by the country as a result of this fire?

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: Part (a) of the question which my hon. colleague has put pertains to the cause of the fire. The ONGC has set up an Inquiry Committee which is yet to submit its report. We are awaiting the reoprt only on receipt of the report, will I be in a position to answer part (a) of the question. In the meantime, the Government has also appointed a one-man committee headed by Maj. Gen. SCN Jatar (Red.) ex-Chairman of Oil India. He will go into the ONGC report to come to a conclusion as far as the cause of the fire is concerned. The second part of the question is why were foreign exports called in when this phenomenon was not an uncommon phenomenon? I would like to bring to your kind knowledge and, through you, to the knowledge of this House that, yes, it is not an uncommon phenomenon. Even the biggest companies bigger than the ONGC, like the Shell, the Seven Sisters of America or whatever it is, have to avail of the services of experts when it is needed and it depends on the kind of fire and the magnitude of the fire. The ONGC, since its inception, had to bring in the foreign experts only in six cases. In the rest of the cases, I am proud to say that the ONGC had handled similar blow-outs on its own to put out the fire. I am proud of the job it hasdone. This particular fire was the worst ever which had happened in the history of the ONGC since 1959. It was a fire about which Neil Adams remarked

that this was the worst they had seen. This was worse than any other fire in Kuwait or anywhere in the world. In spite of that, I give full credit to the ONGC. I am very glad to share with this House—and I am sure you must have read it in the newspapers—that the fire has not only been extinguished but the well has been capped. So, this crisis is over and I give full credit to my ONGC and to the American teams which were there and which had worked hard to bring the fire under control.

In regard to part (c) of the question, as I said, this was the worst one. In the past, there were similar fires which the ONGC had handled on its own and, only in six cases, it had to bring in the experts. This is the worst ever. We had first brought in M/s. Neil Adams Fire Fighting Inc., USA which was not able to give me a clear time-frame. So, for second opinion, we have brought in M/s. Emergency Resources International Inc., U.S.A. which is well known the world over and which is the most renowned fire fighting team. They came and together with the ONGC, they controlled the fire. They have done an excellent job. I don't think any other company, organisation or team anywhere in the world could have done a better job than these teams had done.

SHRI P. UPENDRA: Yes, they have done a good job.

SHRI KRISHNA KUMAR BIRLA: My second supplementary is, how many villagers from villages close to the accident site had to be evacuated from their houses and whether the loss suffered by them has been compensated?

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: Sir, as far as rehabilitation measures are concerned, around 4,000 persons belonging to 1500 families were evacuated and accommodated in schools and colleges located in Amalapuram town on the night of 8th January, 1995. The number of inmates has gradually come down to 1132 persons belonging to 345 families. The entire expenditure for running the relief camps was reimbursed by the ONGC to the District Administration. The ONGC had also spent Rs. 85,000/- for provision of sanitation facilities and drinking water supply to the inmates of the relief camps. Medical teams of the ONGC screened and examined 6,000 persons. The Disrict Administration was also paid Rs. 30,000/- for purchase of medicines. Medicines worth about Rs. 70,000/- were provided to the Health Department for distribution through the medical teams. Eight hundred quintals of rice was distributed to about 4,000 card holders of the affected villages. Temporary shelters were constructed through the District Administration at Z. P. High School, Peruru and at Allavaram at a cost of Rs. 1,00,000/- each. A sum of Rs. 51,50,000/- was advanced to the District Administration for relief and rehabilitation measures. I myself went to the accident site. I met the villagers there and I was fully satisfied with the measures taken by the ONGC on this account.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Mr. Ghufran Azam—not present. Shrimati Renuka Chowdhury.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: Sir, I wish to place on record the exemplary work done by the ONGC and I am proud as a citizen of India that time and again in the history of... (*Interruptions*)...

SOME HON. MEMBERS: Please use the mike.

SHRIMATI RNUKA CHOWDHURY: What do I do?

SHRI DIGVIJAY SINGH: Forget about it.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Mikes cannot work when Renukaji pays compliments. When Renukaji pays com pliments, mikes do not work.

SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: She does not need a make at all.

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: It is a matter of truly national pride that the ONGC has done an exemplary job and in the worst ever blow-out both in this country and in the world, we have had no loss of life. And, whatever is the report that is ultimately going to come—whether it shows the human cause or not—the fact remains that within 12 minutes of this blow-out, all systems were contained and exacuation of the people had started. I also wish to place on record our great praise for the district administration and for the unstinting work that was done by Mr. Manglik of the ONGC, who was always on the spot there, and his entire staff.

However, I would like to have a clarification as to whether—as Mr. Neil Adams said when he left India—he was bogged down by bureaucratic redtape and the Indian Government was asking him for tendering the equipment which was required for putting out the fire. Is that a fact? Secondly, why did we have this disparity in payments?. We paid Neil Adams and his team a phenomenal amount. I wish to know as to what the exact amount of payment was and also whether there was a pre-condition that he would put out the fire and would be paid for it. No guarantees were taken for his job. He just came to examine. And he was paid a phenomenal amount whereas we do not want to pay our own ONGC that amount. So I want to know whether what Neil Adams said was true or not and also why there is this disparity in payments to both.

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: First of all I thank my hon. colleague for paying compliments to the ONGC for the excellent job that they have done. I thank her for mentioning about the good job that the ONGC has done.

About the second part of her question as to exactly how much Neil Adams was paid and what the other conditions were, I do not have the information with me. I shall be glad to pass on this information to her. The third part of her question related to Neil Adams' observation that the functioning of the ONGC was buraucratic. Sir, only when the enquiry report comes, the picture will be clear as to whether there were any delays in decision-making when Neil Adams was there. Sir, the fact remains that Neil Adams has been involved in similar fire-fighting operations earlier and his company has done a good job earlier. But, this fire was the worst that he had seen till now. This was also his first observation which was widely reported in the newspapers. He had mentioned that it was worse than the fire in Kuwait and worse than any fire, in fact, that he had seen in his entire professional career. The second thing which was reported was that there was a time frame given. If you remember I had mentioned that the fire will be brought under control by the 18th of February. When I felt that it was important that we cannot afford to take any chances on this issue, I took a political decision to bring in M/s. Emergency Resources International in U.S.A. the other team, to have a second opinion. I thought that during a crisis, and especially a crisis of this magnitude where we have flames of 80 metres height and such high pressure and temperature and in such an environment in which people have to work, a second opinion was necessary to have a definite time-frame. That was the stage when Neil Adams decided to walk out of the cntract giving personal reasons. Anyway, I will pass on the details of the contract. But Neil Adams was a party to the time-frame that was given—which was the 18th of February and which I announced to the media. So, Neil Adams walked out on his own citing personal reasons. I am glad that M/s E.P.I. Company did a tremendous job.

As regards the allegation that there is bureaucracy in the ONGC and all that, I can assure you that there is no bureaucracy. You have yourself mentioned that the ONGC team was there within minutes on the same night and did such an excellent job and they never went out of step in anything they have done. So, they have done an excellent job. I am not going to go by what Neil Adams says. (Interruptions)

SHRIMATI RENUKA CHOWDHURY: I hope you did pay him for the job... (*Interruptions*).

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: I have mentioned that whatever the details of payments are there, I will pass them on to you.

DR. BIPLAB DASGUPTA: Sir, I find that whenever the Minister in charge of Petroleum speaks he reveals a pathetic lack of knowledge of the industry which he controls. For instance, just now he mentioned about the Seven Sisters of America. I want to know whether he has any understanding of it because out of seven major oil companies in the world, five are American, one is Dutch-British and one is British—not all of them are Americans. I also find it very distressing that the Government has not been able to come out even with a review as to why this fire started. This fire raged for so mny days had been a cause of concern for so many days for all of us and eventually it has been brought under control. Even after that the Government does not know what the reason is. They must be having some hunches. Why don't they share with us what those hunches are? It is not a politically explosive material. Why can't he share it with us? My question is about the fire-fighting company which had been engaged. I am not talking about Neil Adams. I am also not saying that the ONGC could have done this job. No, this is a very difficult job. It was very right on the part of the Government to seek foreign assistance on this. It is a very difficult industry. But the point I am making is that Red Adair is a legendary figure in this business. Why was this man not called in the first place? Why didn't you go in for Red Adair earlier? More important, Sir, America is not the only country in the world which produces oil. The Russians produce more than the Americans. They export very little and that is why you did not realise that Russia has always been the largest oil-producing country in the world. They have got a lot of experience in the oil industry. They also must be having a lot of problem with fire-fighting and all that. Why didn't you explore those alternatives to ensure that at least we have a balanced opinion about how to fight this fire?

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: Sir, through you, let me thank my colleague for paying such excellent compliments for the job I am doing for the last two years. I hope my other colleagues would not share that opinion about me. But, having said that, let me remind my colleague and enlighten him through you, Sir, that the decision to bring Red Adair was mine and only mine. It had been reported all over the country through the headlines on the *Doordarshan* that it was not the ONGC but I called the review meeting and brought M/SERI in. I would also like to enlighten my colleague that a part of my ONGC team had already been to Russia—had been trained by the Russians. We sent two fire-fighting and two ONGC officials to become this core team which had done such an excellent job at Pasarlapudi with the American team. This is what this system is all about. So my colleague needs a bit of enlightenment and I will be absolutely available in the Ministry and he could come and have a discussion with me and my Ministry so that he is enlightened. It is important that the feeling in the House of Elders and of every colleague of mine is respected at least about the petroleum sector which is a complicated sector, they all are enlightened, and it will be my pleasure to enlighten him. He is most welcome.

SHRI M. A. BABY: Will the Minister utilise the expertise of fire-fighting in the Congress?...(*Interruptions*)...

DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI: Will they take the help of some foreign companies to do some fire-fighting within the Congress?...

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Mr. Chairman, Sir, I wish the Minister were equally enthusiastic about sharing not only enlightenment but also many other things that accrue to him. Sir, let me come to the substantial question. This blow-out has taken place in the most fertile part of Andhra Pradesh. Sir, a lot of damage was caused to the crops. Sir, I would like to know as to what compensation has been paid to them. There is something to add, Sir. The soil, which is very fertile, has suffred enormous damage in terms of nutrition and many other things. The water has also got damaged. I would like to know what environmental steps have been taken to undo this damage and provide compensation to the owners of the land whose land quality has been damaged?

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: Sir, the evacuation, rehabilitation and relief measures are being undertaken by the ONGC in close co-ordination with the District Administartion. The Collector of East Godavari district constituted three committees consisting of representatives from the State Revenue Department and the ONGC. The first committee is the Committee for enumeration and assessment of damage to public and private Proporties, like coconut trees, crops etc in the affected areas consequent on the blow-out; the second is the Committee for assessing damages to the houses in the areas affected by the blow-out, and the third is the Committee for assessment of health problems in the area of the blow-out. Then, the information I have is that 2,000 healthy coconut trees, and 50 mango trees in the vicinity have been affected; 16 acres of paddy crop have been affected. Rs. 45 lakhs have been deposited with the District Administration for paying the compensation. Plaints of individuals, as called by the Committee, are being received and assessed. I can assure the hon. Member, for whim I have the highest regard, that the compensation will be given to them. The process is on. As regards the other part of the question the hon. Member has asked, about the environmental damage, I am glad to inform the House through you that as this is a dry high-speed gas, we had very closely monitored what environmental effect it had on the area. Fortunately, Sir, the hydrocarbons are fullly burnt and sulphur dioxide and other toxic materials have not really been detected. We are having the environmental review from our Goa institute. Also, other independent environmental instiutions have been therein place trying to detect if there is any environmenetal damage. I am glad to inform you that no such damage is there.

SHRI S. JAIPAL REDDY: Sir, may be the Minister is right. But, I have come to know through the Agriculture Department of the Andhra Pradesh Government that they have reported the damage caused to the quality of the land. Therefore, I would request the Minister to recheck with the Andhra Pradesh Government as to the damage caused environmentally to the land.

CAPT. SATISH SHARMA: Sir, I have given the assurance through you to the hon. Member. Certainly, I would check up with the State Government and the Agriculture Department to see if there is any damage. I assure that full compensation would be paid.

Corruption in Passport Office

"43. PROF. VIJAY KUMAR MALHOTRA: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the news item captioned "Passports issued to wrong persons, who misused it and trial is on", appearing in The Times of India dated the 2nd December, 1994.